

A TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE SOCIETY



LUTHER'S ARMOURY.

—BY—

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SOME TALK ABOUT
THE BIBLE SOCIETY
AND ITS MONTREAL AUXILIARY.

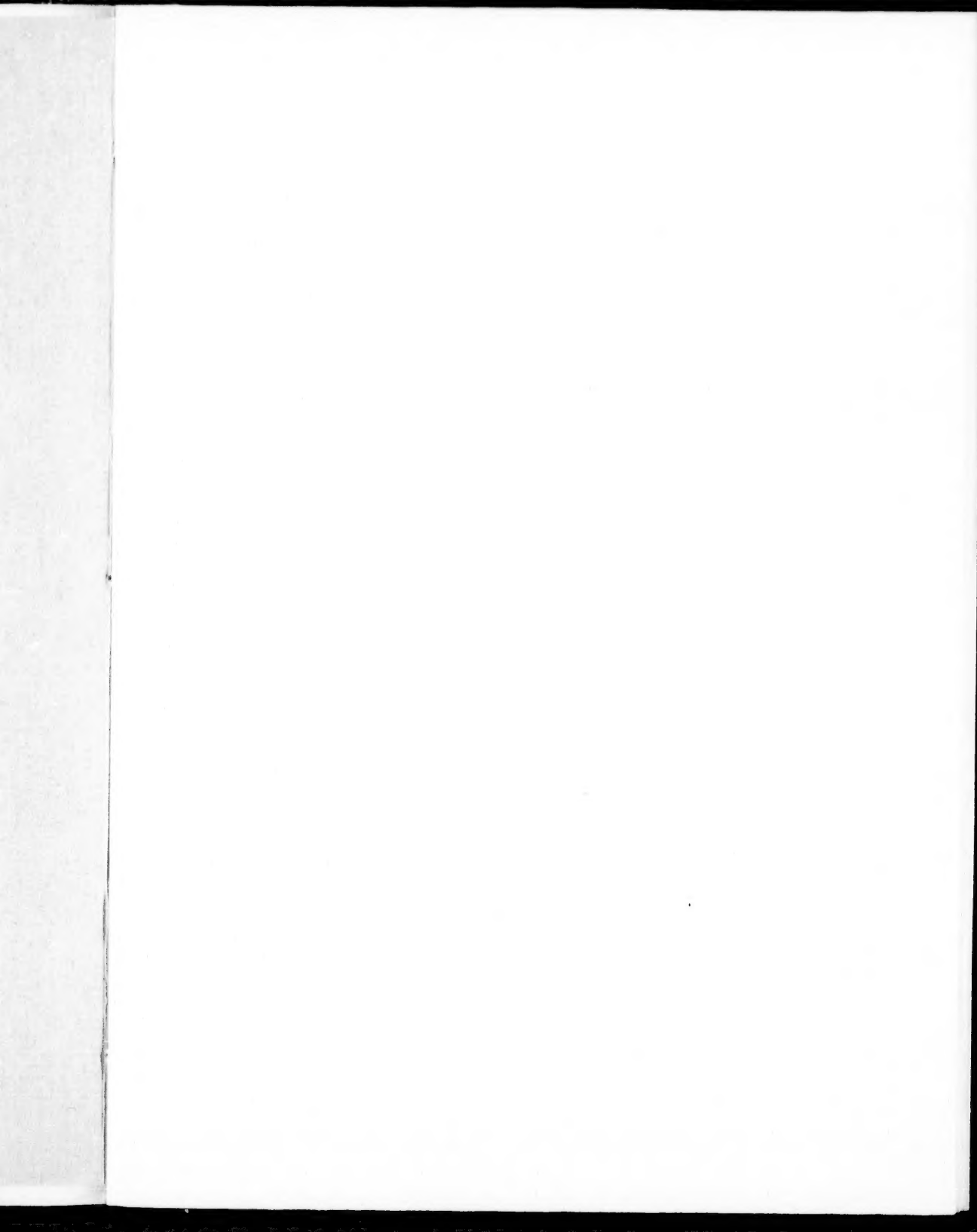
"Will you help us?" asks a member of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The society has done and is doing a great work in the world. It was founded in 1804 with the one simple object of giving the Bible to the whole human race, that all may read there the message of life and salvation through the Saviour that the Book makes known. The Bible Society belongs to no sect or party, but invites all who love the Bible to help in the work of spreading it.

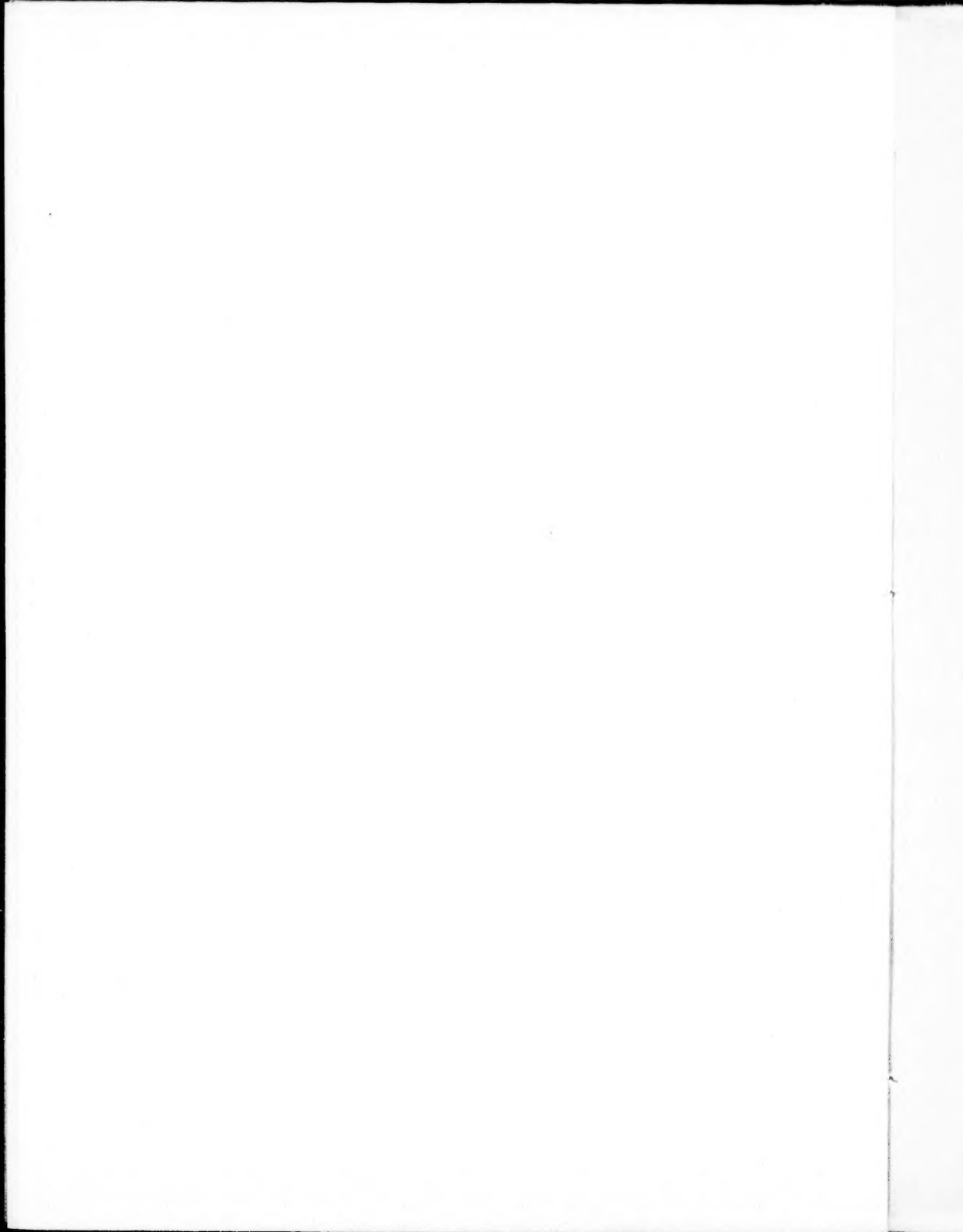
Great Britain has long possessed the treasure of an open Bible, for the great John Wycliffe first gave it to us in English in 1380, more than 500 years ago, though that was before there was any printing. Then noble William Tyndale gave us the first printed English New Testament in 1525, and Miles Coverdale the whole printed Bible 1535. Still, at the beginning of this century the sacred volume was a scarce and dear book even in our Mother-land, when the cheapest Bible cost 4s 6d, and a New Testament 1s 4d, while throughout the greater portion of the world the Book was entirely unknown. Now the Bible Society provides a whole English Bible for sixpence, a New Testament for a penny, any one of the four gospels for a half-penny, while it gives every year thousands of copies, without money and without price, to all who cannot pay for it. It sends its colporteurs, or Bible-hawkers, all over the continents of Europe and Asia, carrying the message of the Gospel to the millions in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Russia, as well as to the Mohammedans in Turkey. Then, wherever the missionaries are going to preach the gospel to the heathen, the Bible Society goes with them, providing the word of God in 320 languages for India, China, Japan, Africa, South America and the many

islands of the sea, while all the British colonies are diligently cared for. Already nearly 140,000,000 of copies have been sent over the world, while about four millions are circulated annually, being six or seven copies every minute, day and night, throughout the year. The results of this no man can tell, for no man knows it; but we may be certain that multitudes have been made happy, because pardoned and purified by the Saviour the Bible makes known to them. Let us see what the Bible can teach ignorant and degraded people.

A poor woman, born a heathen, but brought to a knowledge of the gospel, lived the latter years of her life entirely alone in a solitary hut. A missionary once passing that way called in to see her, and when making the remark, "How lonely you must be here all by yourself," she replied, "Not so lonely as you think; for when I go on my knees and pray, then I talk to God, and when I read my blessed Bible, then God talks to me. While I can do that I am never lonely."

Did you ever hear of the dying chief in the South Sea Islands, on the other side of the world? He had once been a bloodthirsty cannibal feasting on human flesh, but he had been brought to Christ, and to read and love his Bible. One night he had a remarkable dream, which at first troubled him, not understanding it—though afterwards he saw its meaning. To a missionary who visited him, and asked him what his dream was, he said, "I dreamed that I saw at a great distance a beautiful city that seemed to be built of gold, and shone and glittered in the light of the sun. I thought I would like to go there, and I set off, but the way lay over great mountains. I tried to climb over them, but fell down sorely wounded. I tried again and again, but all in vain, till at last, after many falls, I lay down wearied and bruised, and thought I shall never be able to reach the beautiful city. But just then I saw a drop of blood come down from heaven which touched the great mountains, and they all melted away, leaving the way clear and open to the beautiful city." On being asked how he understood the dream, the dying chief replied, "Ah! those great mountains were the mountains of my sins, and trying to climb over





them is like trying to get to heaven by my own strivings and doings. But the precious blood of the Lamb of God can take away all my great sins, and open the way for me to glory." This is what the Bible is teaching dark and ignorant men all over the world; and how eagerly they often long and search for the heavenly light may be seen in another simple but touching story.

A missionary to the Indians of North America, now Bishop Whipple, of Minnesota, relates: "One who had been a heathen red man came 600 miles to visit me in my home. As he came in at the door he knelt at my feet. He said to me, 'I kneel to tell you my gratitude that you pitied the red man. I was a wild man living beyond the Turtle Mountain; I knew that my people were perishing; I never looked in the face of my child that my heart was not sick. My fathers told me there was a great Spirit, and I have often gone into the woods and tried to ask Him for help, and I only got the sound of my voice.' And then he looked into my face in an artless way, and said, 'You do not know what I mean. You never stood in the dark and reached out your hand, and took hold of nothing. One day an Indian came to my wigwam and said to me that he had heard you tell a wonderful story at Red Lake; that you said the great Spirit's Son had come down to earth to save all the people that needed help; that the reason why the white man was so much more blessed than the red man was because he had the true religion of the Son of the great Spirit; and I said, 'I must see that man.' They told me that you would be at the Red Lake crossing, I came 200 miles. I asked for you, and they said you were sick, and then I said, 'Where can I see a missionary?' I came 150 miles more, and I found that the missionary was a red man like myself. My father, I have been with him three moons. I have the story in my heart. It is no longer dark. It laughs all the while.'"

THE INDIAN WOMAN.

That which touches every feeling of my nature is that this blessed Word of God reveals to my aching heart a personal Christ and a personal Saviour. A few months ago I met in a northern forest a blind Christian Indian woman.

Touched with pity for her loneliness and sorrow, I told her how I pitied her blind state, and she said "Yes, I live far from church, and there's no one to lead me to the house of God. When I first became blind I wept. Then there came back to me the words that I had heard in the Book of God, telling me that there is no place in the world that is so poor that Jesus will not come, if the heart is only waiting for Him." So in reading the Bible, and in making it our guide in daily life, we only need to ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

THE NEGRO PREACHER.

Many of the difficulties that are perplexing men with reference to the Word of God would disappear if they would follow the teaching of a simple incident that I will relate.

In the old days of the South a slave, who was also a negro preacher, had an infidel master, and the master said to the slave one day, "Are you a preacher, Sam?" "Well I tells about Jesus some, massa." "Well, if you are a preacher, you ought to understand the Bible. Now, tell me what does this mean;" and he opened the Bible and read, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate"—words that have puzzled wiser men than the poor slave. And, said the slave, "Massa, where is it?" "It's in Romans," said the master. "Oh, my dear massa! I will explain dis 'ole business to you. It is very simple. You begin with Matthew, and do all the dear Lord tells you to do there; and then you go on to Mark, and Luke, and John, and when you get to that place it is easy enough, but you can't begin there." And so, dear friends, look up to Christ, the perfect Saviour, and begin by doing His will, and all else will be simple.

Let us see how some—poor in this world, but rich in faith—have shown their love to God's Word by helping to send it to others. A poor man in Dorsetshire had a little orchard, and selecting one of the trees, he called it the Bible Society's tree; year by year he gathered the fruit from it, sold it, and brought the proceeds as his offering for the spread of the Bible. A poor woman who kept bees, getting a new swarm, resolved that the inmates of the new hive should work for the Bible Society. At the proper time the honey was taken

and sold, and the amount realized was given as her contribution. Another elderly woman, Mary Everett, living at Witchampton, in Dorset, having neither orchard nor bees, possessed a parrot, the only companion of her humble cottage. Finding the bird possessed powers of speech, she affixed to its cage a tin collecting box, and taught the parrot to beg from the visitors who came to see and hear it, contributions for the Bible Society. The box frequently in a year produced as much as £2, and during a course of years many pounds were raised by this novel collector to aid the work which the parrot's owner greatly loved.

Hundreds of millions are yet without the Bible. Will you not help to send it to them? It is not hard to give if we only remember how much and how often we receive. It has been truly said, "A man who receives the ruth of God and gives it forth again is like the sea of Galilee, through which the Jordan flows. He is kept clear and sweet by the passage of the stream. But he who absorbs without giving is like the Dead Sea, which is left stagnant and bitter because it has no outlet."

MONTREAL AUXILIARY BIBLE SOCIETY.

To the credit of the English-speaking race in the various colonies and in the United States, writes the Rev Henry Gomery, the work of the Bible Society commended itself to Christians of the various branches of the Protestant faith as truly evangelical, neither political nor sectarian. The broadest minds throughout the world recognized its platform as one upon which there was no room for crotchet or quibble. It was grandly and uncompromisingly Christian, and nothing else. What wonder, then, that our earlier Christian fathers of Montreal sought to further its work alike among the sturdy settlers speaking our beloved English tongue, the hardy Highlander in his native Gaelic, or our French-Canadian, who loves his language as much as we love ours. The latter even now needs our Christian help in laying open to him in his own tongue the Magna Charta of Christian liberty that teaches him to draw near to his God and Saviour, himself, needing no mere mortal man as the intermediary to stand between him and Jesus Christ.

Three-quarters of a century since, Montreal men of noble aspirations gathered together to devise means whereby "our Canada" should be more fully reached by the Word of God. No one of us can fully grasp the changes since that day of small things. Montreal herself has expanded most marvelously. In the country also has the solitary log house, with its trough roof, changed for the frame house, and that in its turn for the stately brick or stone mansion. The rivers and streams have been broken to harness and run mills everywhere at our bidding, and beautiful churches have arisen for the proclaiming of Christian truth. Canadians have built and endowed magnificent universities for the further up-building of the rising generations of a loyal, intellectual race of men and women worthy of the soil which has fed and nourished them. Yet, let us remember that one of the greatest factors in this beneficent change has been our Montreal Bible Society, which has quietly, unostentatiously placed the Bible in every village and settlement at a nominal charge, and in fact has given freely of the money at its disposal to every enterprise for increasing Christian effort in the diffusion of the Word among the poor and friendless of our own race and also to our French-Canadian brethren alike in town slum, in country cottage and farm house, and backwoods shanty. Our Canadian needs absorb most of our funds, but with increased liberality and means we could do far more for the dear old British and Foreign Bible Society in its world-wide work amongst the "fields white for the harvest of the Lord."

Still, there is no more important field in the world than Canada, which God has in his providence entrusted to us, His people, to win for Him our neighbors, still so ignorant of the Word of God.

Dear Friend,—Will you not join our ranks and help us liberally in this, God's work?

The Montreal auxiliary has circulated, up to 1894, 803,659 copies of Bibles and Testaments.

With the best wishes of

Your brother in Christ,

HENRY GOMERY.

